

Pulitzer Mania for...

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er writers of The Washington Post for their exceptional, multi-faceted coverage of the deadly shooting rampage at Virginia Tech.

He has since been deluged with interviews about what he calls the Pulitzer mania. "But, to be frank, what's more important than the Pulitzer is the chance to say thanks to relatives and friends who've been incredibly supportive," he told the Asian Journal.

A journalist for the past 10 years since he was a junior in high school, Jose was born in the Philippines in February 1981. He grew up in Zambales and Pasig, and attended elementary in Pasig Catholic College. Jose's mother, Emily, was a single mom who raised him with the help of his maternal grandparents.

In an email sent to the Asian Journal, Vargas relates his path to the Pulitzer:

"My grandparents, Leonila and Ted, moved to the States and took me with them when I was young. We moved to Mountain View, California in 1993 and Lolo, Lola and my Uncle Rolan, my mom's younger brother, raised me. We come from modest means; my Lola was a food server, my Lolo was a security guard.

"Here in the States, I found a second family at Mountain View High School, where the principal, Pat Hyland, and the superintendent, Rich Fischer, acted as if they were my surrogate parents. With their help, and because of the generosity of a venture capitalist, I landed a full scholarship for college. I attended San Francisco State University and studied Political Science and Black Studies, graduating in 2004. One of my proudest moments was when Uncle Rolan, Auntie Aida and all my Lolas -Lola Leoning, Lola Rosie and Lola Florie-attended my college graduation," Jose said.

Jose started his journalism career at 17, while he was a high school junior. He was first an intern and then became a paid staffer for the Mountain View Voice, a local weekly paper, covering city hall meetings, school board meetings, light features. After graduating in high school in 2000, he landed as a copy boy at the San Francisco Chronicle, sorting mail, delivering faxes and answering the phones.

"A Filipino American named Leslie Guevarra, whom I consider one of my mentors, hired

me," he continued. "Back then, in 2000, she was terribly impressed with my writing. I particularly recall her saying, in that deep, low, intimidating voice of hers, that my writing was 'simplistic.'

"Leslie advised: 'Be simple. Don't be simplistic.' A very good lesson. Leslie was one of the top managers at the Chronicle. She was an inspiration to me. Her work ethic, her discipline, her skill was undeniable."

A few months into the job, Jose started writing for the Chronicle and landed summer internships at the Philadelphia Daily News in summer 2001 and at the Washington Post in summer 2003. After he got back from The Post, the Chronicle offered Jose a full-time reporting job on the city desk which he accepted. A few months later, however, The Post offered him a job months before his college graduation.

"I couldn't turn it down," he said. "So, two days after my graduation, I moved to Washington, DC to work for the Washington Post."

That was in 2004. Since then, Jose has written so many articles for the Post including a couple of features about Filipinos, the culture of video games, a yearlong series on AIDS in Washington, and the award-winning Virginia Tech massacre. Vargas is now covering the political campaign, running up to the November presidential elections.

"I specialize in the marriage of the Internet and politics, how all the candidates are campaigning online. Barack Obama has raised a tremendous amount of money on the Internet," he said.

Despite his success in the US, Vargas remains proud to be Filipino.

"I stay in touch with Filipino culture. Whenever I visit Lola Leoning in Mountain View, which is about once every two months, the only thing on TV is TFC and Wowowee," he said.

"I love my Lola's *kare-kare* which is my favorite Filipino dish and I can't get enough of Auntie Aida's *ube* when- ever she makes them. I speak with my mom in the Philippines often. I still watch Korina Sanchez, try to keep up with Filipino news and have many Filipino friends, all of whom I've known since I was in middle school. I still speak Tagalog and some Zambal," he added.(AJ)

Doctors Caught Joking...

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gling and cheering.

At one point, a hand appeared with a cell phone camera taking a close-up picture of the surgery.

As a doctor gingerly pulls out the six-inch long canister from the male patient's rectum, someone shouted, "Baby out!" amid loud cheers.

The doctor then removed the canister cap and sprayed the contents toward the crowd of nurses and doctors viewing the procedure.

It remains unclear who shot the video and who posted it on YouTube, but the person who

posted it removed it from the Web site Wednesday.

The video has angered the unidentified patient, who plans to press charges, his lawyer Guillen Ceniza said Wednesday.

The government-run Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in the central city of Cebu, where the surgery took place, is conducting an investigation, a spokesman said Wednesday.

Dr. Emmanuel Gines said more than 10 people were involved -- including staff and medical and nursing students from a nearby operating

room.

He said the hospital took videos of surgeries of peculiar cases, but only with the consent of the patient.

Dr. Jose Sabili, president of the Philippine Medical Association, said the group would conduct an investigation if a formal complaint was filed. Doctors found violating medical ethics could be suspended or expelled from the association, which would result in the suspension or termination of their state health insurance accreditation.

The results of the investigation could also be used by the Professional Regulations Commission to suspend or revoke their licenses, Sabili said.

"I believe what they did was

very blatant," he said.

Health Undersecretary Alexander Padilla said the Health Department would conduct a separate investigation.

The 39-year-old patient received surgery on January 3, three days after a New Year's drinking spree and a "one-night stand" with a male partner, Ceniza said.

He said his client was too drunk to remember how the body spray canister ended up in his body.

Ceniza said the man was determined to file charges but would wait for the results of the hospital's investigation, expected later in the week (AP)

IMF Chief Warns...

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people will be starving. Children will be suffering from malnutrition, with consequences for all their lives."

Development gains made in the past five or 10 years could be "totally destroyed," he said, warning that social unrest could even lead to war.

"As we know, learning from the past, those kinds of questions sometimes end in war," he said.

Thirty-seven countries currently face food crises, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.

On Saturday, Germany's development minister, who attended the World Bank's Sunday meeting, called for greater regulation of the global biofuels market to prevent its expansion driving up food prices.

"It is unacceptable for the export of agrofuels to pose a threat to the supply situation of the very people already living in poverty," Heidmarie Wiczorek-Zeul said in a statement.

She said the world needed new rules that balance goals, including climate change mitigation, food security and social development.

The development group Oxfam, a frequent IMF critic, said rich countries were largely responsible for the food crisis because they had been cutting aid to developing countries and encouraging biofuel production, which, the IMF said, was responsible for almost half the increase in the demand for food crops.

"Rich countries' demand for biofuel is driving up food prices and is a big part of the problem," said Elizabeth Stuart, an Oxfam policy adviser. "Meanwhile, by cutting aid levels, they are doing precious little to be part of the solution."

Strong impact on poor

Strauss-Kahn spoke at a news conference here after a daylong meeting of the steering committee of the 185-nation IMF that dealt with the unfolding global financial crisis that had affected economies around the world.

In its communiqué, the committee noted "that a number of developing countries, especially low-income countries, face a sharp rise in food and energy prices, which have a particularly strong impact on the poorest segments of the population."

The committee urged the IMF to work closely with its sister institution, the World Bank, and other organizations to provide developing countries with financial support and policy advice to deal with these problems.

The Washington-based IMF and World Bank were established 64 years ago to respectively regulate the global economy and provide aid to poor countries to reduce poverty.

Unusual uncertainties

The finance ministers and central bankers said their meeting took place "at a time of unusual uncertainties surrounding global and financial market prospects. It stresses that the challenges facing the world economy are global in

nature, requiring strong action and close cooperation among the membership."

They said risks to economic outlook "come from the still unfolding financial market turmoil and from the potential worsening" of housing markets and the credit crisis.

"Inflationary risks—notably from higher food, energy and commodity prices—have also risen," the communiqué said.

The IMF said that in dealing with these risks governments must make sure inflation was kept under control, recognizing that each country's situation was different but coherent action was necessary.

Another topic on the committee's agenda was IMF reform. The ministers said changes such as giving developing countries with rapidly growing economies such as Brazil, India and China slightly more of a say in IMF operations "will strengthen the fund's role in promoting financial stability and international monetary cooperation."

Strauss-Kahn and Italy's Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, chair of the steering committee, welcomed the reforms to the institution's structure agreed

to by the board at the meeting. Strauss-Kahn predicted that the reforms would be approved by enough countries to meet the necessary threshold of 85 percent of the votes later this month.

"I think there is really little chance that we won't reach the 85 percent," he said.

Most important decisions at the IMF, such as changing voting rights, and approving calls for more capital, require an 85-percent vote, giving the United States and the European Union effective vetoes. The United States is the largest shareholder with more than 15 percent of the votes.

Multilateral institutions Strauss-Kahn said that following the reforms, the IMF needed to refocus on its mission.

"We now need to stop looking inwards to the problem of organizing the fund itself and spend more time looking outwards to the problems of the world," he said.

The IMF called for a strong front to put the reeling world economy back on track.

"The global crisis has to be addressed with a global view and by strengthening the role of multilateral institutions," Padoa-Schioppa, chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC),

the IMF's top policymaking body, told reporters in a briefing.

The IMF said in its statement that "policymakers should continue to respond to the challenge of dealing with the financial crisis and supporting activity, while making sure that inflation is kept under control."

Unlike the last IMF meeting in October, where internal reforms were high on the agenda, this time the multilateral institution faced a full-blown, and still unfolding, financial shock that began in August amid rising defaults on US high-risk subprime home loans.

IMF expertise needed

Tasked with maintaining global financial stability, the IMF, whose own finances are strained, insists its expertise and global range make it a key player in resolving what Strauss-Kahn earlier called the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The IMF last week warned the global economy was slowing so rapidly it could slide effectively into recession this year and next.

IMF policymakers also welcomed moves by central banks to provide liquidity support to ease strains in the credit markets. (Inquirer.net)

Gov't Goes After...

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varra, Francisco Dio, Arnel Lagonoy, Mary Ann Magno, Geonell Vin Centeno, Delia Barreda, Sofia Guzman, Pres-tifero Prado, Leonides Manalo and Lydia Supremido.

A preliminary investigation will be conducted by the DOJ Anti-Hoarding Task Force headed by Senior State Prosecutor Roberto Lao to determine whether there is a probable cause to pursue the filing of criminal charges against them before the court.

The rice traders are facing charges of violation of the provisions of RA 7581 which prohibit illegal price manipulation through the commission of hoarding, cornering or hoarding of grain, unauthorized possession of government rice and diversion of government stocks by retailers authorized to sell government stocks, unauthorized re-bagging or re-sacking of government rice in commercial sacks, selling or lending government stocks to another grains businessman, lack of required signboard and lack of guaranty bon and fire insurance.

Gonzalez stressed that the filling of charges against the 13 rice traders only proves the government's no-nonsense campaign to address the perceived rich shortage problem.

Gonzalez also assures the public that the government is doing all it can to alleviate the rice problem, adding that the country has sufficient rice stocks to last for 57 days.

He added that steps are being made to insure that the country's rice reserve will be increased in the coming days.

The 13 rice traders may be sentenced to a maximum of

15 years and may be required to pay P2 million fine if convicted.

The DOJ secretary also said that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is working very hard to insure that the country will have sufficient rice for all its citizens.

He said the government is now talking with the governments of Thailand and Vietnam in order to get more supply of rice.

The Philippines recently imported some 1.5 million metric tons of rice from Vietnam recently even as the United States promised to supply the country with cheap rice to augment its reserves.

This developed as the Bureau of Customs also lodged with the DOJ five cases involving illegal smuggling of wheat flour, unlawful importation of flour, illegal shipment of onions and falsification of business permit.

BOC Commissioner Napoleon Morales personally filed the complaints before the office of Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno.

The agency filed two cases against the directors and officers Rubills International Inc. for undervaluation, underweight and lack of necessary import permit from the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) on their shipments of wheat flour valued approximately at P30.8 million with corresponding duties and taxes of P2.59 million.

The BOC identified these officers as Francisco Billones, Angel Deray, Mary Lucille Billones, Susana de la Cruz Go, Anacleto Sanchez, Roberto Amposta, Oscar Torres, Maria Catapang Jumento, Rosalio Teves, Leonardo de la Pas, and Hannah Aileen Lim Hernandez and Meynar-

do Banayo, licensed customs broker.

Another complaint was filed by the BOC involving unlawful importation of sugar consigned to Medardo Banglos which was made to appear as locally produced in order to evade payment of duties and taxes and the required import permit from the Sugar Regulatory Authority (SRA).

Customs intelligence and agents apprehended the shipment at Port of Manila from Cotabato City on board a Superferry 09 after discovering said shipment of sugars, based on its markings and labels, originated from Thailand.

Said shipment was in violation of Section 3601 in relation to sections 2503 and 2530 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines.

The fourth case involves the shipment of 6 x 40 containers of onions with an approximate value of P890,249 which was imported without the required import clearance from the Bureau of Plant Industry in violation of the provisions of TCCP.

Named respondents in the case are Lilybeth Valenzuela, Mahesh Kumar, Loida Bracamonte, Luzner Casi, Dranreb Viojan, and Manuel Joey Rex Anito and Diosdao Bagon, the licensed customs broker who processed the subject shipments.

BOC, likewise, filed a criminal complaint against Gloria Ho De Mesa, Tito Ho De Mesa and Racuel Cruz-Mayuga for having submitted falsified business permit with the customs accreditation secretariat in connection with the application for accreditation of Cleomar Trading Incorporated as importer.

Morales said the filing of the charges is part of the BOC's crackdown against smugglers of regulated commodities. (AJ)

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF CLARK



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

RFQ# 8106-0033

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER

For

MILLER PLAZA

HACC is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified firms with a documented track record of providing the required services, through a formal Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. Proposals shall demonstrate detailed plans on how the Respondent intends to provide the required services and funding in a manner that will result in the successful and timely completion of respondents proposed plan.

Respondents to this solicitation must have documented experience with market rate housing, tax credit, mixed-finance, low-income and mixed-income housing development and knowledge. Minority- and women-owned businesses are encouraged to respond.

A Pre-proposal conference will be held in the HACC's Board Room, 5390 E. Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, NV 89122, on May 5, 2008 at 10:00 AM, all Respondents are encouraged to attend. Attendance is not mandatory for respondents participating in this process.

Sealed responses to this solicitation will be received by HACC until 1:00 PM local time on May 21, 2008. No late proposals will be accepted. All RFQ documents are available on the HACC website at www.haccnv.org in Portable Document Format (PDF), or contact the Contracts Department at (702)451-8041 Ext. 1424